

# RAY'S DAUGHTER

continued, as he quickly turned and led that young lady away. "Two of my staff desire to be presented. May I have the pleasure?"

There was no mistaking the general's disapprobation of the official head of the sisterhood as represented on the Sacramento. Though he and his officers remained aboard an hour, not once again would he look towards Dr. Wells or seem to see any of the party but Miss Ray—this, too, despite the fact that she tried to explain matters and pour oil on such troubled waters.

Capt. Brent sent champagne to the distinguished party, and Miss Ray begged to be excused and slipped away to her stateroom, only to be instantly recalled by other cards—Col. and Mrs. Brent, other old friends of her father and mother. She remembered them well, and remembered having heard how Mrs. Brent had braved all opposition and had started for Hong-Kong the day after the colored steamer for Manila; and their coming with most hospitable intent only added to the poor girl's perplexities, for they showered welcomes upon her and bade her get her luggage up at once. They had come to take her to their own roof. They had secured such a quaint, roomy house in Ermita right near the bay shore, and looking right out on the Luneta and the parade grounds.

They stormed at her plea that she must not leave her companions. They bade her send for Miss Porter, and included her in their warm-hearted invitation; but by the time Maiddie was able to get a word in edgewise on her own account, and begged them to come and meet Mrs. Dr. Wells and the Red Cross sisterhood, they departed.

The general, in Marion's brief absence, had expressed his opinion of that official head, and the Brents had evidently accepted his views. Then Vinton and his officers loudly begged Mrs. Brent to play chaperone and persuade Miss Ray and Miss Porter to accompany them in their fine white launch in a visit to the admiral on the flag ship, and said nothing about others of the order.

The idea of seeing Dewey on his own deck and being shown all over the Olympia? Why, it was glorious! But Miss Ray faltered her refusal, even against Miss Porter's imploring eyes. Then Stuyvesant declared he didn't feel up to it.

The general went off to the fleet and the Brents back to the shore without the girls, and in the course of the afternoon four more officers came to tender their services to "Billy Ray's daughter," and none, not even a hospital steward, came to do much for the Red Cross, and by sundown Maiddie Ray had every assurance that the most popular girl at that moment in Manila army circles was the least popular around the Sacramento, and Kate Porter cried herself to sleep after an out-and-out scolding with two of the band, and the emphatic assertion that if she were Marion Ray she would cut them all dead and go live with her friends ashore.

But when the morning came, was it to be wondered at that Miss Ray had developed a high fever? Was it not characteristic that before noon from the official band down, from Dr. Wells to Dottle Fellows, the most diminutive of the party, there lived not a woman of their number who was not eager to tender or services and in desire to be at the sufferer's bedside? Was it not manifest that Stuyvesant, who had shunned the sisterhood for days, now sought the very women he had scorned and begged for tidings of the girl he loved?

## CHAPTER XII.

October had come and the rainy season was going, but still the heat of the midday sun drove everybody within doors except the irresponsible Yankee soldiery, released "an pass" from routine duty at inner barracks or outer picket line, and wandering about this strange, old-world metropolis of the Philippines, reckless of time or temperature in their determination to see everything there was to be seen about the willow stronghold of "the Dons" in Asiatic waters.

Along the narrow sidewalks of the Escolta, already bordered by American signs and sidewalks and rendered even more than usually precarious by American drinks, the blue-shirted boys wandered, open-eyed, marveling much to find "twixt twelve and two the shutters up in all the shops, not conducted, as were the bars, on the American plan, while from some, still more oriental, the sun and the shopper both were excluded four full hours, beginning at 11.

South of the walls and outskirts of Old Manila and east of the Luneta lay a broad, open level, bounded on the south by the suburb of Ermita and in the midst of the long row of Spanish-built houses extending from the battery of huge Krupp in the bay side, almost over to the diagonal avenue of the Novalena, stood the very cozy, finely furnished house which had been hired as quarters for Col. Brent, high dignitary on the department staff.

Its lower story of red stone was pierced by the arched driveway through which carriages entered to the patio or inner court, and as the tenets of Madrid the queen of Spain is possessed of no personal means of locomotion, so possibly to no Spanish dame of high degree may be attributed the desire, even though she have the power, to walk.

No other portal, therefore, either for entrance or exit, could be found at the front. Massive doors of dark, heavy wood from the Luzon forests, strapped with iron, swung on huge hinges that, unless well oiled, defied

the efforts of unmuscular mankind. A narrow panel opening in one of these doors, two feet above the ground and on little hinges of its own, gave means of passage to household servants and, when pressed for time, to such of their superiors as would condescend to step high and stoop low.

To the right and left of the main entrance were store rooms, servants' rooms, and carriage-room, and opposite the latter, towards the rear, the broad stairway that, turning upon itself, led to the living-rooms on the upper floor—the broad saloon at the head of the stairs being utilized as a dining-room on state occasions, and its northward end as the parlor. Opening from the sides of the saloon, front and rear, were four large, roomy, high-ceilinged chambers.

Overlooking and partially overhanging the street and extending the length of the house was a wide inclosed veranda, well supplied with tables, lounging chairs and couches of bamboo and wicker, its floor covered here and there with Indian rugs, its surrounding waist-high railing fitted with parallel grooves in which slid easily the frames of the windows of translucent shells, set in little four-inch squares, or the dark-green blinds that excluded the light and glare of midday.

With both thrown back, there sprang an unobstructed view of the parade ground even to the edge of the distant glades, and here it was the household sat to watch the military ceremonies, to receive their guests, and to read or doze throughout the drowsier hours of the day. "Campo de Baguayan" was what the natives called that martial flat in the strange barbaric tongue that delights in "gigs" and "ags," in "ines" and "angs," even to repetition and repetition.

And here one soft, sensuous October afternoon, with a light breeze from the bay tempering the heat of the slanting sunshine, reclining in a broad bamboo easy-chair, sat Maiddie Ray, now quite convalescent, yet not yet restored to her old-time vigorous health.

Her hostess, the colonel's amiable wife, was busy on the bank milky leading to the kitchen, deep in counsel with her Filipino majordomo and her Chinese cook, servants who had been well trained and really needed no instruction, and for that matter got but little, for Mrs. Brent's knowledge of the Spanish tongue was even less than her command of "Piglin" English. Nevertheless, neither Ignacio nor Sing Sway would fail to nod in the one ease or smile broadly to the other in assent to her every proposition—it being one of the articles of this domestic faith that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, could best be promoted throughout the establishment by never seeming to differ with the lady of the house. To all outward appearances, therefore, and for the first few weeks, at least, householding in the Philippines seemed some thing almost idyllic, and Mrs. Brent was in excellent over the remarkable virtues of Span-shal-trained servants.

There had been anxious days during Maiddie's illness. The Sacramento had been ordered away, and the little patient had to be brought ashore. But the chief quartermaster sent his special steam-launch for "Billy Ray's daughter," the chief surgeon, the best ambulance and tent to meet her at the landing; a squad of Sandy's troopers bore her reclining-chair over the side into the launch, out of the launch to the waiting ambulance, and out of the ambulance upstairs into the airy rooms set apart for her, and with Mrs. Brent and Miss Porter, Sandy and the most devoted of army doctors to bear her company and keep the fans going, Maiddie's progress had been rather in the nature of a triumph.

So at least it had seemed to the austere vice president of the Patriotic Daughters of America, who, as it happened, looked on in severe disapproval. She had asked for that very ambulance that very day to enable her to make the rounds of regimental hospitals in the outlying suburbs, and had been politely but positively refused.

By that time, it seems, this most energetic woman had succeeded in alienating all others in authority at corps headquarters, to the end that the commanding general declined to grant her further audience, the surgeon general had given orders that she be not admitted to his inner office, the deputy surgeon general had asked for a sentry to keep her off his premises, the sentries at the first and second reserve hospital had instructions to tell her, also politely but positively, that she could not be admitted except in visiting hours, when the surgeon, a steward, or— and here was "the most unkindly out of all"—some of the triumphant Red Cross could receive and attend to her, for at least the symbol of Geneva had gained full recognition. At last Dr. Wells and the sisterhood were on duty, comfortably housed, cordially welcomed, and presumably happy.

The officials remained in blissful ignorance of the tremendous nature of the charges laid at their doorway Miss Perkins, and Maiddie Ray, while duly informed of the frequent calls and kind inquiries of many an officer, and permitted of late to welcome Sandy for little talks, had been mercifully spared the infliction of the personal visitation thrice attempted by her fellow-traveler on the train.

"I don't believe you were ever intimate friends," said Mrs. Brent, "and that she nursed and cared for you in the ears when you were suffering from shock and fright because of a fire. That's what she says, though. What was it, Maiddie? Was it there

Mr. Stuyvesant got that from a book face?—and lost his eyebrow?"

And then it transpired that Mr. Stuyvesant had been a frequent and assiduous caller for a whole fortnight, driving thither almost every evening.

But Maiddie was oddly silent as to the episode of the fire on the train. She laughed a little about Miss Perkins and her pretensions, but to the disappointment of her hostess could not be drawn into talk about that tall, handsome New Yorker.

And what seemed strange to Mrs. Brent was that now, when Maiddie could sit up a few hours each day and see certain among the officers' wives, arriving by almost every steamer from the states, and have happy chats with Sandy every time he could come galloping in from Paço, and was taking delight in watching the parades and reviews on the Baguayan, and listening to the evening music of the band, Stuyvesant had ceased to call.

Had Maiddie noticed it? Mrs. Brent wondered, as, coming in from her conference with the house of commons, she stood a moment at the door-way gazing at the girl, whose book had fallen to the floor and whose dark eyes, under their ceiling lids, were looking far out across the field to the walls and church towers of Old Manila.

It was almost sunset. There was the usual throng of carriages along the Luneta and a great regiment of volunteers, formed in line of platoon columns, was drawn up on the "Campo" directly in front of the house. Sandy had spent his allotted half hour by his sister's side, and, remounting, had entered out to see the parade. Miss Perkins had declared on the occasion of her third fruitless call that not until Miss Ray sent for her would she again submit herself to be scolded. So there seemed no immediate danger of her reappearance, and yet Mrs. Brent had given Ignacio orders to open only the panel door when the gate bell clanged, and to refuse admission, even to the drive-way, to a certain importunate caller besides Miss Perkins.

Three days previous there had presented himself a young man in the white dress of the tropics and a hat of fine Manila straw, a young man who would not send up his card, but in very Mexican Spanish asked for Miss Ray. Ignacio sent a boy for Mrs. Brent, who came down to reconnoiter, and the youth reiterated his request.

"An old friend" was all he would say in response to her demand for his name and purpose. She put him off, saying Miss Ray was still too far from well to see anybody, bade him call next day when Dr. Frank and her husband, she knew, would probably be there, duly notified them, and Frank met and received the caller when he came and sent him away in short order.

"The man is a crank," said he, "and I shall have him watched." The colonel asked, that one or two of the soldier police guard should be sent to the house to look after the stranger. A corporal came from the company barracks around on the Calle Real, and it was after nightfall when next the "old friend" rang the bell and was permitted by Ignacio to enter.

But the instant the corporal started forward to look at him the caller bounded back into outer darkness. He was tall, sluewy, speedy and had a 20-year start before the little guardsman, stout and burly, could squeeze into the street. Then the latter's shouts up the San Luis only served to startle the sentries, to spur the runner, and to excite and agitate Maiddie.

Dr. Frank was disgusted when he tried her pulse and temperature half an hour later and said things to the corporal not strictly authorized by the regulations. The episode was unfortunate, yet might soon have been forgotten but for one hapless circumstance. Despite her announcement, something had overcome Miss Perkins' sense of injury, for she had stepped from a carriage directly in front of the house at the moment of the occurrence, was a witness to all that took place, and the first one to extract from the corporal his version of the affair and his theory as to what lay behind it. In another moment she was driving away towards the Novalena, the direction taken by the fugitive, fast as her coachman could whip his ponies, the original purpose of her call abandoned.

As in duty bound, both Mrs. Brent and Dr. Frank had told Sandy of this odd affair. Mrs. Brent described the stranger as tall, slender, sallow, with his cavernous dark eyes that had a wild look to them, and a strangely foxy beard all over his face, as though he hadn't shaved for long weeks. His hands—of course, she had particularly noticed his hands; what woman doesn't notice such things?—were slim and white. He had the look of a man who had been long in hospital; was probably a recently discharged patient, perhaps one of the many men just now getting their home orders from Washington.

"Somebody who served under your father, perhaps," said Mrs. Brent, soothingly to Marion, "and thought he ought to see you." "Somebody who had not been a soldier at all," said she to Sandy. "He had neither the look nor the manner of one." And Sandy marvelled a bit and decided to be on guard.

"Maiddie," he had said that afternoon, before riding away, "when you get out next week we must take up pistol practice again. You beat me at Leavenworth, but you can't do it now. Got your gun—anywhere?—the one Dad gave you?" And Dad

or Daddy in the Ray household was the "lovingest" of titles.

Maiddie turned a languid head on her pillow. "In the upper drawer of the cabinet in my room, I think," said she. "I remember Mrs. Brent's examining it."

Sandy went in search, and presently returned with the prize, a short, big-barreled, powerful little weapon of the bull-dog type, sending a bullet like that of a Derringer, hot and hard, warranted to shock and stop an ox at ten yards but miss a barn at over twenty; a woman's weapon for defense of her life, not a target pistol, and Sandy twisted the shining cylinder approvingly. It was a gleaming toy, with its ivory stock and nickleed steel.

"Every chamber crammed," said Sandy, "and sure to knock spots out of anything from a mad dog to an elephant, provided it hits. Best keep it by you at night, Maiddie. These natives are marvelous sneak-thieves. They go all through these ramshackle upper stories like so many ghosts. No one can hear them."

Then, when he took his leave, the pistol remained there lying on the table, and Frank, coming in to see his most interesting patient just as the band was tramping back to its post on the right of the long line, picked it up and examined it, muzzle uppermost, with professional approbation. "Yours, I see, Miss Ray; and from your father. A man hit by one of these," he continued, musingly, and fingering the fat leaden bullets, "would drop in his tracks. Do you keep it by you?—always?"

"No!" laughed Maiddie. "I'm eager to get to my work—healing—not giving—gunshot wounds."

"You will have abundant time, my dear young lady," said the doctor, slowly, as he carefully replaced the weapon on the table by her side, "and—opportunity, if I read the signs aright, and we must get you thoroughly well before you begin. Ah! What's that? What's the matter over there?" he lazily asked. It was a fad of the doctor's never to permit himself to show the least haste or excitement.

A small opera glass stood on the sill, and, calmly adjusting it as he peered, Frank had picked it up and leveled it towards the front and center of the line just back of where the colonel commanding sat in saddle. A lively scuffle and commotion had suddenly begun among the groups of spectators. Miss Ray's reclining-chair was so placed that by merely raising her head she could look out over the field. Mrs. Brent ran to where the colonel's field glasses hung in their leather case and joined the doctor at the gallery rail.

Three pairs of eyes were gazing fixedly at the point of disturbance, already the center of a surging crowd



A TALL, HANDSOME YOUNG OFFICER STOOD IN THE DOORWAY.

of soldiers off duty, oblivious now to the fact that the band was playing the "Star Spangled Banner," and they ought to be standing at attention, hats off, and facing the flag as it came floating slowly to earth on the distant ramparts of the old city.

Disinfectant of outside attractions, the adjutant came stalking out to the front as the strain ceased, and his shrill voice was heard turning over the parade to his commander. Then the surging group seemed to begin to dissolve, many following a little knot of men carrying on their shoulders an apparently inanimate form. They moved in the direction of the old botanical garden, towards the Estado Mayor, and so absorbed were the three in trying to fathom the cause of the excitement that they were deaf to Ignacio's announcement. A tall, handsome, most distinguished-looking young officer stood at the wide doorway, dressed cap-a-pie in snowy white, and not until, after a moment's hesitation, he stepped upon the room and was almost upon them, did Miss Ray turn and see him.

"Why, Mr. Stuyvesant!" was all she said; but the tone was enough.

Mrs. Brent and the doctor dropped the glasses and whirled about. Both instantly noted the excess of color. It had not all disappeared, by any means, though the doctor had, when, ten minutes later, Col. Brent came in. At the moment of his entrance, Stuyvesant, seated close to Marion's reclining-chair, was, with all the doctor's caution and curiosity, examining her revolver. "Rather bulky for a pocket-pistol," he remarked, as, muzzle downward, he essayed its insertion in the gaping orifice at the right hip of his Manila-made, flapping white trousers. It slipped in without a hitch.

"What was the trouble out there awhile ago?" asked the lady of the house of her liege lord. "You saw it, I suppose?"

"Nothing much. Man had a fit, and it took four men to hold him. Maiddie, look here, Capt. Kress handed this to me—said they picked it up just

lack of where the colonel stood at parade. Is he another mad?"

Marion took the envelope from the outstretched hand, drew forth a little carte-de-visite on which was the vignette portrait of her own face, gave one quick glance and dropped back on the pillow. All the bright color fled. The picture fell to the floor. "Can you—find Sandy?" was all she could say, as, with imploring eyes, she gazed into honest Brent's astonished face.

"I can, at once," said Stuyvesant, who had risen from his chair at the colonel's remark. With quick bend he picked up the little card, placed it face downward on the table by her side, never so much as giving one glance at the portrait, and noiselessly left the room.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Like many another man's that summer and autumn of '98, Mr. Gerard Stuyvesant's one overwhelming ambition had been to get on to Manila. The enforced sojourn at Honolulu had been, therefore, a bitter trial. He had reached at last the objective point of his soldier's desires, and with all his heart now wished himself back on the Sacramento with one, at least—or was it at most?—of the Sacramento's passengers. The voyage had done much to speed his recovery. The cordial greeting extended by his general and comrade officers had gladdened his heart. Pleasant quarters on the breezy bay shore, daily drives, and, presently, gentle exercise in saddle had still further benefited him.

He had every assurance that Marion Ray's illness was not of an alarming nature, and that, soon as the fever had run its course, her convalescence would be rapid. He was measurably happy in the privilege of calling every day to ask for her, but speedily realized the poverty of oriental maris in the means whereby to convey to the fair patient some tangible token of his constant devotion. Once, La Estremada displayed a keg of Malaga grapes, and several pounds of these did Stuyvesant levy upon forthwith, and, after being duly immersed in water and cooled in the ice-chest, sent them in dainty basket by a white-robed lackey, with an unimpeachable card bearing the legend "Mr. Gerard Stuyvesant, One Hundred and Sixth, New York Infantry Volunteers," and much were they admired on arrival; but that was in the earlier days of Maiddie's convalescence, and Dr. Frank shook his head. Grape seeds were perilous stuff, and Mrs. Brent knew they would not last until Maiddie was well enough to enjoy them, and so they did not.

Military duty for the staff was not exacting about Manila in the autumn days. It was the intermission. The Spanish war was over; the Filipino yet to come. There was abundant time for "love and sighing," and Stuyvesant did both, for there was no question the poor fellow had found his fate, and yet thought it trembling in the balance. Not one look or word of hers for him could Stuyvesant recall that was more winsome and kind than those bestowed on other men. Indeed, had he not seen with jealous eyes with what bounding cordiality and delight she had met and welcomed one or two young gallants, who, having been comrades of Sandy in "The Corps" at the Point, had found means to get out to the Sacramento, obviously to see her, just before that untimely illness claimed her for its own?

Paraphar of the cavalry, son of a Philadelphia family well known to the Stuyvesants of Gotham and "trotting in the same class," had come over from department headquarters, where he had a billet as engineer officer, to call on Stuyvesant and to cheer him up and contribute to his convalescence, and did so after the manner of men, by talking in all manner of topics for nearly an hour and winding up by a dissertation on Billy Ray's pretty daughter and "Wally" Foster's infatuation. Paraphar said it was the general belief that Maiddie liked Wally mightily well and would marry him were he only in the army. And Stuyvesant wondered how it was, in all the years he had known Paraphar and envied him his being a West Pointer, and in the cavalry, he had never really discovered what a bore, what a wearisome ass, Paraphar could be.

Then just as Miss Ray was reported sitting up and soon to be able to "see her friends"—with what smiling significance did Mrs. Brent so assure him!—what should Stuyvesant's general do but select Stuyvesant himself to go on a voyage of discovery to Holo and beyond. The commanding general wanted a competent officer who spoke Spanish to make a certain line of investigation. He consulted Vinton, Vinton thought another voyage the very thing for Stuyvesant, and so suggested his name.

It went the luckless Gothamite away just at the time of all others he most wished to remain. When he returned, within a dozen days, the first thing was to submit his written report, already prepared aboard ship. The next was to report himself in person at Col. Brent's, to be asked into the presence of the girl he loved and longed to see, and, as has been told, ushered out almost immediately, self-detailed, in search of Sandy.

He had found the lad easily enough, but not so the man with the fit, whom, for reasons of his own and from what he had seen and heard, Stuyvesant was most anxious to overtake. His carriage whirled so rapidly past the parade ground

and over to the First Reserve hospital, whither he thought the victim had been borne, but no civilian, with or without fits, had recently been admitted.

Inquiry among convalescent patients and soldiers along the road without resulted at last in his finding one of the party that carried the stricken man from the field. He had come to, said the volunteer, before they had gone quarter of a mile, had soused his head in water at a hydrant, rested a minute, offered them a quarter for their trouble, buttoned up the light coat that had been torn open in his struggle, and nervously but positively declared himself all right and vastly obliged, had then halied a passing carromata, and been whisked away across the moat and drawbridge into the old city. There all trace was lost of him.

Baffled and troubled, Stuyvesant ordered his coachman to take him to the Luneta. The crowd had disappeared. The carriages were nearly all departed. The lights were twinkling here and there all over the placid bay. It was still nearly an hour to dinner-time at the general's mess, and he wished to be alone to think over matters, to hear the smothering plash and murmur of the little waves, and Stuyvesant cowed in his wrath and vexation that Satan himself must be managing his affairs, for, over and above the lunged-for melody of the rhythmic waters, he was hailed by the buzz-saw stridencies of Miss Perkins, whose first words gave the lie to themselves.

"I'm all out of breath, and so let up running after you I can't talk, but I was just bound to see you, an' I've been to your house so often the soldiers laugh at me. Those young men haven't any sense of decency or respect, but I'll teach 'em, and you see they'll sing another song. Where can we sit down?" continued the lady, her words chasing each other's heels in her breathless haste. "Those lazy, worthless Spanish officers take every seat along here. Why, here! your carriage will do, an' I've got a thousand things to say!" ("Heaven be merciful," grumbled Stuyvesant to himself.) "I saw you driving, and I told my cabman to catch you if he had to flag the hide off his horse. Come, aren't you don't you want to sit down? I do, anyhow! There's no comfort in my car. Here, I'll dismount it now. You can just drop me on the way home, you know. I'm living down the Calle Real a few blocks this side of you. All the soldiers know me, and if they had their say it wouldn't be the stuck-up Red Cross this flitting with doctors and living high on the dainties our folks sent over. The boys are all right. It's your generals that have ignored the P. D. A.'s, and I'll show 'em presently what a mess they've made. Wait till the papers get the letters I have written. But, say—" ("And this is the woman I thought might be literary!" mused Stuyvesant as he merrily followed to the little open carriage and, with a shiver, assisted his angular visitor to a seat.)

"A key!" she shouted, "A key, enehero! Su sobre una hoy. Mañana! Ocho! Ocho, enehero? Ocho! Now don't bewhew who's into in their lingo, anyhow? 'Tisn't tardy, I know; that's afternoon. Tardees? Thank you. Now—well, just sit down, first, lieutenant. You see we know how to address officers by their titles, if the Red Cross don't. I'd teach 'em to Mister me if I was an officer. Now, what I want to see you about—this: Your general has put me off one way or another every time I've called this last two weeks. I've always treated him politely, but for some reason he'll never see me now, and yet they almost ran after me at first. Now, you can fix it easy enough, and you do it and you won't regret it. I only want him to listen to me three minutes, and that's little enough for anybody to ask. You do it, and I can do a good deal more for you than you think for, an' I will do it, too, if certain people don't treat me better. It's something you'd thank me for mightily later on, if you don't now. I've had my eyes open, lieutenant, an' I see things an' I hear things an' I know things you mighty little suspect."

"Pardon me, Miss Perkins," interposed Stuyvesant at this juncture, his nerves a little twitching under the strain. "Let us get at the matters on which you wish to speak to me. Mañana, coehero!" he called to the pinyon Filipino on the box. "I am greatly pressed for time," he added, as the carriage whirled away, the hoofs of the pony team flying like shuttles in the instant the little scamp were headed homeward.

"Well, what I want mostly is to see the general. He's got influence with Gen. Drayton and I know he, and these Red Cross people have poisoned his ears. Everybody's ears seem to be just now against me and I can get no hearing whatever. Everything was all right at first. Everything was promised me and then, first one and then another, they all backed out, and I want to know why—I'm bound to know why, and they'd better come to me and make their peace now than wait until the papers and the P. D. A.'s get after 'em, as they will—do you hear my words now—they will do just as soon as my letters reach the states. You're all right enough. I've told them how you helped with those poor boys of mine aboard the train. Bad way they'd been in if we hadn't been there, you and I. Why, I just canvassed that train till I got clothes and shoes for every one of those poor burned-out fellows, but there wouldn't anybody else have done it. And nursing—you ought to have seen those boys come to thank me the day I went out to the Presidio, an' most cried—some